



# USS *Pontus*

## (LST-201), AGP-20

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A Latin form of Pontos, a Greek god of the sea.

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Builder: Chicago Bridge and Iron Co., Seneca, IL

Length: 328'

Beam: 50'

Draft: 14' 1"

Displacement: 4,080 f

Top speed: 11.6 knots

Complement: 119

Armament: 1 x 3"/50; 4 x 20mm

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### **HISTORY:**

*Pontus* was laid down as *LST-201* by the Chicago Bridge and Iron Co., Seneca, Ill., 13 July 1942, launched 2 March 1943, placed in reduced commission 24 March 1943 and ferried down the Mississippi River to Algiers, La., and commissioned in full 2 April 1943, Lt. Samuel D. LaRoue, USCG, in command.

Following shakedown off the Florida coast, *LST-201*, with *LCT-254* on her deck got underway for the Pacific 22 May 1943. On 11 August she arrived at Brisbane, thence shifting northward to Mackay for partial conversion to a motor torpedo boat tender. After installation of water distillers, machine and carpentry shops, extra generators and a ten-ton crane and the embarkation of a Navy repair crew, the LST moved up the Australian coast toward New Guinea. On 18 October she arrived at Milne Bay, completed conversion, and on 18 November continued on

to Buna, Morobe, and, finally, Dreger Harbor. There, until after the fall of Saidor, she tended PT boats operating along the coast of New Guinea to cut the Japanese barge supply line to their troops on that island and on New Britain.

In January 1944 Allied forces landed at Saidor and the PTs ranged farther up the coast. *LST-201*, having survived the almost daily air raids of February, moved up to lessen the distance the torpedo boats were forced to travel to strike at the Japanese. Prior to the Aitape-Hollandia landings (22 April) *LST-201* returned to Dreger Harbor for supplies and spare parts, then proceeded to Celeo Island, off Aitape, where she tended MTBRons 7 and 8 as they patrolled between the Driniumor River and Hollandia, and, with the LST as communications base, coordinated efforts with the RAAF to destroy Japanese ferry barges which landed their troops behind Allied lines at night.

On 15 August 1944, *LST-201* was officially renamed *Pontus* and designated AGP-20. On the 24th she got underway for Brisbane and a much needed overhaul. On 17 October she sailed again for Mackay to begin working her way back to the forward area, arriving at Mios Woendi 17 November. From there she continued on to Leyte where she tended PTs from 27 November until 6 April 1945. She then carried spare parts to Luzon, whence she steamed south to Samar to tend PTs at Guiuan Harbor. At the end of the month she shifted to Malalag Bay, Mindanao, and in August, to Tawi Tawi to support MTBRon 8 again.

After the cessation of hostilities, *Pontus* performed tending and decommissioning duties at Subic Bay and Guiuan Harbor. On 20 November she sailed for home. She arrived at San Pedro 24 December, continued on to the east coast and reported for inactivation at New York 5 February 1946. Decommissioned 2 April 1946, she was struck from the Navy List 1 May and on 26 November 1947 was transferred to the Maritime Commission for disposal.

*Pontus* earned 3 battle stars during World War II.

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## SOURCES:

*Dictionary of American Naval Fighting Ships*, Vol. V, (1979), pp. 350-351.

